

only the first step to clearing the way for a real vote on the floor. Supporters and opponents alike who agree that Dr. Foster deserves a vote by the entire Senate, will vote to invoke cloture, so that we can finally give this nomination the fair vote it deserves.

Cloture is a step on the road to fairness, but it is only the first step. I hope that my colleagues will vote to invoke cloture, giving us the opportunity to take the second step—the step that counts—the up-or-down vote on the nomination by the entire Senate.

Throughout this nominations process, several Republicans have stated that, in fairness, the nomination should go before the entire Senate for a final vote. Some Members have suggested that by allowing a cloture vote, the majority leader will be giving the nomination the fair consideration it deserves. They have suggested that a vote on cloture is the same as a vote on the nomination. Obviously, that is not the case.

I believe that some Senators who feel strongly about the issue of fairness intend to vote for cloture, even if they intend to vote against the nomination itself.

Although I disagree with their position on Dr. Foster, they at least agree that it is wrong to filibuster this nomination. They refuse to let a minority of the Senate block the will of the majority.

Dr. Foster is well qualified to be Surgeon General. He has endured this confirmation process with dignity and grace. He has fully and forthrightly answered all the questions raised, and he deserves to be confirmed. And if the Senate treats him fairly, I am confident he will be confirmed.

We all know what is going on here. Republican opponents of a woman's right to choose are filibustering this nomination because Dr. Foster, a distinguished obstetrician and gynecologist, participated in a small number of abortions during his long and brilliant career.

From the beginning, the only real issue in this controversy has been abortion. All the other issues raised against Dr. Foster have disappeared into thin air. They have no substance now, and they have never had any substance. Dr. Foster has dispelled all of those objections, and he has dispelled them beyond a reasonable doubt.

The only remaining question is whether Republicans who support a woman's constitutional right to choose will vote for their principles, or pander to the antiabortion wing of their party by going along with this unconscionable filibuster.

The vote will tell the story. If the Senate is fair to Dr. Henry Foster, this filibuster will be broken, and Dr. Foster will be confirmed as the next Surgeon General of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I notice the Senator from Rhode Island is on

his feet. I was intending to seek unanimous consent to speak for a minute as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, many of us are interested in the subject of welfare reform. I have now had an opportunity to hear a discussion of the scheduling that has been proposed for the Senate for the remainder of this week, next week, and in the weeks following the July 4 recess. I would say, as one Member of the Senate, I hope very much that we will see a welfare reform bill brought to the floor of the Senate by the majority party. We are ready, willing, and waiting to debate the welfare reform issue. We have produced, on the minority side, a welfare reform plan that we are proud of, one we think works, one we think will save the taxpayers in this country money, and one that will provide hope and opportunity for those in this country who are down and out and who need a helping hand to get up and off the welfare rolls and onto payrolls.

It is our understanding that the majority party, after having come to the floor for many, many months talking about the need and urgency for welfare reform, and their anxious concern about getting it to the floor, have run into a snag. They are off stride because they apparently cannot reach agreement in their own caucus on what constitutes a workable welfare reform plan that would advance the interests of this country.

We hope very much they find a way in their caucus to resolve their internal problems. Democrats have a welfare reform bill that will work, that is good for this country, and that we are ready to bring to the floor immediately. The question for them, I suppose, is what is wrong with the Republican welfare reform bill?

The problem Democrats see and the reason that we have constructed an alternative is that the welfare reform bill they are talking about, but apparently cannot yet agree on, is that it is not a bill about work. We believe that welfare reform must be more than a helping hand; it must also be about work.

In our bill, we call it Work First. We extend a hand of opportunity to those in need. Those who take advantage of the opportunities that this system gives them also have a responsibility. We will offer a helping hand. We will help you step up and out when you are down and out. You deserve a helping hand. But you have a responsibility in return. Your responsibility is to get involved in a program which will provide the training to lead to a job.

Welfare is not a way of life and cannot be a way of life. People have a responsibility. We are going to require them to meet that responsibility.

A good welfare reform bill is about work. The plan that has been proposed, but apparently not yet agreed to because of internal dissension in the other caucus, the caucus of the majority party, is unfortunately not about work. It is about rhetoric. It is about passing the buck. It is about saying let us send a block grant back to the States with no strings attached. If they require work, that maybe is OK. But they do not require work so their plan is not about work. It is about passing the buck. It is also not really about reform. It hands the States a pile of money and requires nothing, nothing of substance from them in return.

It does not protect kids. As we reform the welfare system, let us understand something about welfare. Two-thirds of the money we spend for welfare in this country is spent for the benefit of kids. No kids in this country should be penalized because they were born in circumstances of poverty. Welfare reform must still protect our children.

Finally, the proposal the majority party is gnashing its teeth about does nothing really to address the fundamental change that helps cause this circumstance of poverty in our country—teen pregnancy and other related issues. Their piece of legislation really takes a pass on those issues. We have to be honest with each other. We have to address the problem of teen pregnancy in a significant way.

The problem of teenage pregnancy is not going to go away. It does relate to poverty and it does relate to circumstances in which children live in poverty. The annual rate of unmarried teen mothers has doubled in this country in just one generation, and it continues to rise. There are a million teen births every year in this country now—1 million teen births, 70 percent of whom are not married. In fact, nearly 1 million children will be born this year who, during their lifetimes, will never learn the identity of their fathers. You cannot call a welfare reform plan true reform if it does not address that issue.

We hope we will soon see legislation on the floor of the Senate that is meaningful welfare reform legislation. Senator DASCHLE, Senator BREAU, Senator MIKULSKI, and others have helped construct a plan I am proud of—a plan that will work, a plan that says “work first,” a plan that will not punish children born in circumstances of poverty.

Now the question is, Where is the welfare debate? It has been postponed. Why? Because the majority party, so anxious to deal with welfare reform, now tells us for one reason or another, it is not on the horizon for the legislative calendar. I think that is a shame. I hope we will see it on the Senate agenda very soon.

Mr. President, if I might take 1 additional minute, not in morning business—on this bill?